

***** BMHA Newsletter *****



BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA

Volume I Number 1

October 1990

Welcome to the first issue of the BMHA Newsletter! We're quite proud of it --- inspite of its rather rough-looking typography and layout. It's a product of my Model 100 laptop and a basic dot matrix printer. The next issue should look much slicker --- especially if we trade up to a PC and a fancy printer.

I'd like to again extend an invitation to all you bikie-hams to send in your writings about your rigs, your home-brewings, your adventures, your experiences while bicycle-mobile.

As you can see, several of our people contributed excellent articles. To those who missed their DEADLINES (you know who you are!) please buckle down and get your stuff in for the January issue. The deadline is Dec 1.

Expenses for this issue alone will run to just under \$100. Our Board of Advisors agrees that we must have your financial backing. To put it plainly: If you want to continue to receive the BMHA Newsletter you must indicate your support by sending in a check, if you haven't already done so.

-----NAOA, Editor

ABOUT BMHA

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a "Stray" in the June '89 issue of QST asked to "get in touch with hams who operate bicycle-mobile, or in any other human-powered conveyance", signed by Hartley Alley, NAOA.

25 hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected info.

Then in April of '90 we had our own BMHA Forum at the Dayton Hamvention. We played to a packed house, overflowing the tiny room assigned to us. Now our mailing list stands at 85.

OUR PEOPLE

You sent in your BMHA Questionnaires, we made a quick study of them. This is what we found:

The 78 hams on our mailing list hold these licenses:
Extra.....37%
Advanced.....38%
General.....12%
Technician.....12%
Novice.....1%

Average age of respondents = 41
Youngest = 13 yrs
Oldest = 71 yrs

Occupations:
Professional...53%
Business.....20%
Technical.....15%
Student.....6%
Retired.....6%

Our professional people are mostly engineers. The rest being:
2 physicians
3 attorneys
5 college profs

Our home QTH's:
Midwest.....51%
East coast.....13%
Mountain13%
Southern12%
West coast.....9%
Canada & foreign3%

Miles pedaled in one day:
200 or more....11%
100 to 200....51%
less than 100..38%

Ed Powell, N6BPH of Oceana, CA has ridden 300 miles in a day! And he just finished his 2nd transcontinental bike trip. (Ed's trip to be featured in a later issue.)

Should BMHA have a newsletter?
Yes....89%
No.....11%

Will you attend a BMHA separate Rally?
Yes....64%
Maybe..25%
No.....11%

Will you check in to a BMHA net on HF?
To date:
17 said Yes
5 said Maybe

HEADSETS PRO

As a recent entrant into the bicycle mobile arena, I thought I would pass on some safety tips for two-wheel QSOing. The first thing to make things a bit safer and easier to deal with is to get the rig out of your hand. My first stab at it was to carry a two meter handheld in my jersey pocket. I'd reach back and pull it out to have a QSO. This caused me a lot of concern, as I knew I would have to drop the rig if I needed to grab the handlebars suddenly for steering or braking. It seemed to me that in a tight situation, I might hesitate just long enough to wind up in an accident.

I went to the hardware store and bought some small diameter bungee cords, with hooks already attached. Using the bungees, I attached the HT to the handlebars where they meet the stem. This lets me keep my fingers wrapped around the handlebars with my thumb on the PTT switch. I have an ICOM HS-10 headset/boom mike wired for a Kenwood TH-xx series transceiver that allows me to keep my left ear open for traffic. I have used it in some very heavy winds and while going in excess of 40 miles per hour and have not experienced any wind noise problems. It is not recommended that you use a two-ear headset, as it is critically important to be able to hear traffic. (It may also be illegal.)

A home-brew 1/4 wave vertical with a single counterpoise completes the installation. I originally used a rubber duck antenna, but its range is extremely limited. I was concerned about putting any kind of rigid wire on the rig in front of my face. If I take a spill, I don't want to complicate the situation by poking a piece of stiff wire though my head! My solution was to take a piece of hook-up wire and place it in a piece of plastic tubing---the kind typically used for connecting aquarium hoses. It's stiff enough to hold the wire vertical, but soft enough to bend or break before it lodges too deeply in my cranium.

As a final note, it is important to remember that you are not sitting at your "normal" operating position in a vehicle or at home---you are out on the road where you need to pay LOTS of attention. Don't let the fun of talking on the radio interfere with your riding---things are tough enough out there!

----Len Koppl, KD0RC
4990 Osage Dr #C5
Boulder, CO 80303

HEADSETS CON

Avery Jenkins, KB1WM, Newtonville, MA writes:.....I'm looking for a speaker/mike for my ICOM HT, which should make things a lot easier. In the past, when I've used a headset with VOX, I found that I often accidentally trigger the transmitter with my heavy breathing going up a hill, or when I yell at a particularly poor example of the Boston driver!

Since I live near Boston, where automobile congestion is endemic, my bicycle mobile station has become invaluable for several public service events which require a ham to easily cross the town. In most cases I'm faster than a car.

Jerry LaRocca, KF8EB, Massillon, OH, writes:....the handie-talkie takes a helluva beating mounted on the handle bars like you saw when we rode together. I have had to repair the BNC antenna connector twice; and that is no easy task on such a small piece of equipment.

When I do use it now, I use a "fanny pack" and the stock switch box supplied with the Santec headset. It's not quite as handy that way, but it is better than messing up the radio.

Aaron Peer, KB8FSH, of Fort Ashby, WV writes:.....got my novice on my 12th birthday and my general 6 months later. Thought I'd let you know that my bike and my HT make a great combination.

Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U, of Ann Arbor, MI writes:.....worked a Brazilean whose English was not so good. He couldn't understand what I meant by being "bicycle-mobile". The next station who worked him told him in Spanish. He laughed hysterically!

BMHA NEWSLETTER

EDITOR: Hartley Alley NAOA

BOARD OF ADVISORS: Russell Dwarshuis KB8U, Len Koppl KDORC, Bob Pulhuj KE8ZJ, Mike Nickolaus NFON

We welcome articles, suggestions, announcements, letters, photos, artwork --- anything pertaining to bicycling while operating an amateur radio, or vice versa!

Material should be submitted before Dec. 1, Mar. 1, June 1. or Sept. 1 for inclusion in the ensuing issue.

BMHA NEWSLETTER is the quarterly publication of the Bicycle Mobile Hams of America. Issued in Jan, Apr, July, and Oct.

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ANNUAL DUES: \$5



CONTRIBUTORS

The following have contributed \$5 or more, as of Sept 15th. Thanks to all.

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QSL CORNER

In this space we feature QSL cards that have a bicycle-mobile photo or motif. Send yours in. We'll run it.

WA4YDK

- Bicycle Mobile



*
ELLIOT KLEIMAN
4701 MCKINLEY ST
HOLLYWOOD FL 33021

Elliot Kleiman, WA4YDK, Hollywood, FL pulls in HF DX on his bike as easily as most of us do from our base stations. His awards: WAS, DXCC, CQDX---all from his bicycle seat. Info about his gear in a later issue.



The "Golden Era," Model AI, £20. Hind Wheel Insulated.

HOME-BREW PROJECTS

THREE HOBBIES IN ONE!

My three hobbies --- hamming, biking, and home-brewing --- recently became one when I built a bicycle with a radio on it! And it was all because I tried to keep up with my 15 year-old son Mike on a 50 mile bike ride.

In a biking magazine I found the answer: a recumbent bike. It said that a recumbent could go further and faster with less effort because of its low profile and superior mechanical advantage. This was enough for me. I built a recumbent from scratch.

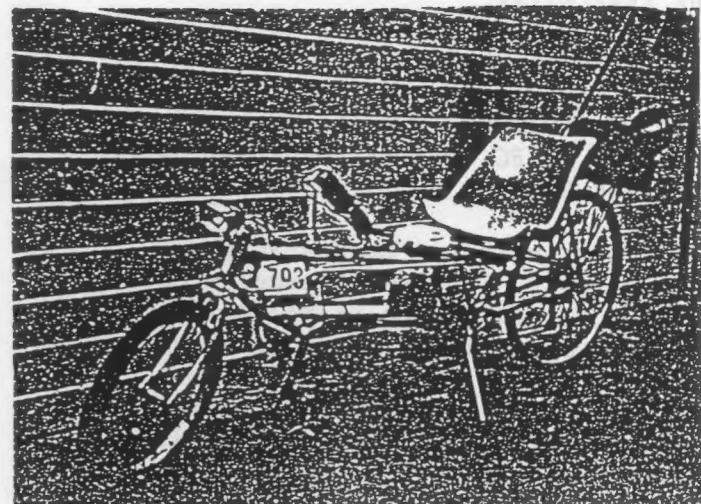
I spent the winter months building the frame. It's a combination of 1 3/8" thinwall exhaust tubing and 3/4" hydraulic tubing. The frame alone weighs about 15 lbs; its total weight, with radio gear and battery, runs to about 60 lbs.

Utilizing the belt clip, I mounted an HT on the top tube above the crank, on a "floating" bracket. By "floating" I mean that the bracket has a 2-point pivot mount that lets it move up and down with the bumps of the road.

The antenna is a 5/8 wave collapsible with a BNC connector. The base loading coil is a spring, which goes from vertical polarity at a standstill to horizontal polarity when I'm pedaling all out! This problem was resolved by taking a 8" long piece of plastic integrated circuit chip "carrier" tube (U shape) and tie-wrapping it to the BNC connector, and along the spring to give it sufficient support to keep it vertical. The antenna is mounted above and behind my head on top of the "seat post". This gives maximum radiating height and is also useful for mounting a wind sock, for increasing my visibility to on-coming traffic. A large strobe light (home brew) gives me added protection to the rear.

I use a speaker mic, clipped to my shirt pocket, making listening and access to the microphone easy. Power for the HT is a 12 volt 4.0 amp hour NiCad battery pack, mounted between the horizontal frame members. In the high power mode (5.5 watts) I easily hit repeaters that are 30 miles away --- full quieting! But, most important, when I'm pedaling my recumbent I can keep up with my son Mike!

Bob Pulhuj, KE8ZJ
PO Box 11429
Toledo, OH 43611



Bob Pulhuj's home-brew recumbent bike.

ANSWERS FROM BMHA QUESTIONNAIRE ON:

"most memorable or exciting adventure while bicycle-mobile"

....surprising other bikies with my "wired" appearance.

....making it to the end of a long ride.

....having an HT stolen out of my bag at O'Hare by the baggage handlers.

....do dogs and cement trucks count?

UPCOMING IN BMHA

1991 Dayton Hamvention, April 26-28

Our BMHA Forum has been tentatively set for Sunday the 28th, 9:30 am to 11:00 in a larger room than we had last year. Will confirm this in the next (Jan.) issue of the BMHA NewsLetter.

The January issue has many articles of interest coming up, including a report on a trip that combines bicycle-mobiling and canal-boating in Holland.

Mike Nickolais, NFON, of South Sioux City, NE has agreed to organize the HF net for us. Mike has a kilowatt and a beam --- just what's needed for the job. Mike has been given the names of those who expressed interest, and he will make contact.

LETTERS

Dear Hartley,

..... This summer has been fairly successful in terms of bicycle mobile operation. I operated field day from my back yard. I stuck my Kenwood TS-120s in a pannier and wound a loading coil for twenty meters, and had the trusty Kantronics KT-115 on the handlebars. I set the mike gain way down on the Kenwood so it put out only 5 watts and adjusted the ALC on the Kantronics for 5 watts also.

I managed 119 phone QSOs and 7 CWs for a whopping total of 665 points. I operated about 18 hours out of 24. This should put me in the top ten of the one-operator one-transmitter mobile category. Look for the results in October 1990 QST.

I've also continued to chase DX and new states from the bike. On the DX front I worked a few new countries. I've now worked 71 DXCC countries.

I recently contacted an enthusiastic operator in Northern Ireland. He wants to send a picture of my setup to the RSGB for possible publication in their magazine! I'll send him one once I get some more film developed. I'll make sure to mention BMHA!

Sincerely,

Russell Dwarshuis, KB8U
Ann Arbor, MI

Dear Hartley

..... I attended the seminar in Dayton and really enjoyed your presentation. I live in the northern part of Nebraska but know many of the towns you pedaled through along with many of the hams you met.

One of my yearly activities is to ride on the RAGBRAI --- the mass bike ride across Iowa. As you probably have heard, it's the largest organized ride in the US -- over 10,000 riders this year.

This was my 5th ride. We had 15 hams in our group this year. My motor home was used as the support and SAG vehicle.

ICOM sponsored us with IC-2SAT's, complete with extra batteries, chargers and two IC-228H's for the motor home. We provided communications for the sponsor, along with using the HT's for finding the support vehicle at the nightly stops.

I also distributed copies of your letter and questionnaire to our group of riders. Hopefully you'll receive some responses from them.

Looking forward to Dayton in 1991 and hope to see you there.

Mike Nickolaus, NFON
South Sioux City, NE

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA (BMHA)

Please complete and return to:

BMHA
PO Box 4009
Boulder, CO 80306

Date _____

Name _____ Call _____ License Class _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

Regular Membership: \$5 per year
Additional contributions will help defray cost of preparing and mailing the quarterly BMHA Newsletter.

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

(Make checks payable to BMHA, Bicycle Mobile Hams of America)

REARVIEW MIRRORS

I'm convinced that the rearview mirror is cycling's most important safety device. It has saved me and other cyclists from countless life-threatening situations.

You wouldn't for a moment think of driving a car without a rearview mirror. A mirror gives you instantaneous access to vital information: it tells you what's behind you and what's about to overtake you.

The most common bike-auto collision occurs when an overtaking car sideswipes a bicyclist. With a mirror you can see overtaking vehicles and swerve out of the way, if it's necessary. The mirror helps you to anticipate all sorts of dangerous situations. It will warn you of big trucks and RVs that are about to overtake you. It will help you in making turns, changing lanes, or taking a lane. On city bike paths you won't be surprised by the pseudo-racer who zooms past without an audible signal.

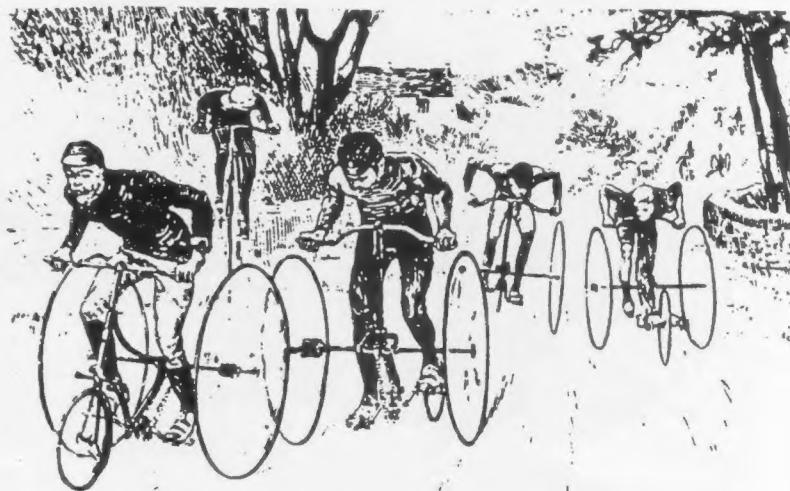
On club rides the leader can look back in his mirror and check on the other riders. It also comes in handy when a twosome is out for a spin. A mirror-equipped strong rider is not apt to motor away from a weak rider in the rear.

In a lighter vein. On club rides our bunch usually keeps their eyeglass mirrors on when we stop at a restaurant for lunch. Comes in handy for checking out bikies of the opposite sex. And we once cheered the Dodgers to a World Series win---with our backs to the TV screen.

----excerpt from:

"COLORADO CYCLING GUIDE"
by Jean & Hartley Alley
(illust. 377 pages \$16.95)
Pruett Publishing Co.
Boulder, CO 80301

(The best and safest rearview mirror that we've seen is the "TAKE A LOOK" cycling mirror. It works on hardshell helmet or eyeglasses. Has an acrylic mirror, and is made of brass and stainless steel, yet it weighs less than an ounce. \$9.95 postpaid. Bike Peddler Bike Prod. 5991 26th St., Greeley, CO 80634.) ----Ed.



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Address Correction Requested

First Class Mail